COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PROGRAMS - WHAT ARE THEY? THEY'RE YOURS!

by Holly Cratsley

During the past few weeks, as new programs for the fall have been taking shape, several questions have been raised about the Cambridge Community Schools program in general and the Agassiz Community Schools program in particular. This article is an attempt to answer these questions.

Over the past twenty-five years, community schools programs have been developed by more than 100 cities in the United States. Two of the most well-known are those of Flint, Michigan and New Haven, Connecticut, but each one differs at least somewhat from the others, depending on the needs and available resources of the community. The community school idea, however, is based on the following points:

A COMMUNITY SCHOOL
- may open at 7:00 a.m. and remain open as late as 11:00 p.m.
- may remain open seven days a week and all year round.
- is a place where lots of people - the very young, the very old, and the in-betweens as well as the school-age children - find interesting and beneficial things to do throughout the day as well as in the late afternoon and evening.
- is a center of co-ordination for many of the activities and services now present in each community, such as the city recreation program, public health services, and work with the elderly and with teenagers.
- seeks, where both wise and possible, to make use of buildings and facilities in the community in addition to those already found in the public school plant.
- is a focus of community life where local citizens identify their interests, problems, needs, and ways of handling them.*

The Cambridge Community Schools programs started in June of 1969. There are 14 individual programs, one for each of the elementary school areas in the city. Each of these 14 individual programs is controlled by a local community council which is the decision-making body in their program.

In our area the council meets every two weeks (usually the second and fourth Thursdays of each month) to decide policy questions concerning the Agassiz program. These council meetings are as close to the traditional New England town meetings as it is possible to come in this age of automation and alienation. The entire community actually belongs to the council - there is no set number of members. Everyone is welcome to join. However, approximately fifteen people in our area have chosen to attend the meetings regularly in the past six months, providing the continuity needed to run a strong program.

The council hires and fires personnel, signs - when possible - legal documents, sets budget priorities, authorizes spending of the monies and oversees the pro-
gram from week to week.

If individuals within our community have views which they want to express concerning Community Schools, there are two avenues open to them. The first, and the best, is to come to the council meetings. If this is not possible, they should call people who do attend the council meetings and ask them to raise a question or express a view. However, individuals should remember that as the council does function as a town meeting, a majority vote comprises a decision. It is the responsibility of the individual citizen with an idea to convince the majority of individuals at a particular council meeting to vote in favor of his idea. If an idea can muster a majority vote, it becomes policy.

In Cambridge, each council has one professional community organizer (a co-ordinator) and one local resident (an assistant co-ordinator) who work for them. These two staff people, paid by the city, try to carry out the council's wishes. For example, if the council decides it wants a program for small children in the afternoon, the staff, consulting at length with neighborhood people, would create ideas for several possible programs. The council then decides which, if any, of the programs they want. Next, it is the staff's responsibility to make that program a reality - space must be found for the activity, volunteers (neighborhood people, outside professionals) may be needed, supplies and equipment must be bought or found. In addition to this work, the staff is legally responsible for the control and use of the school after school hours.

These programs which are created and controlled by the council, and implemented by the staff, are funded by the city. Each year the city council passes a budget for the total, city-wide program. Each individual council gets an equal share of this budget. During the last fiscal year the Agassiz Community Schools program received, or had the use of, the following monies: Salaries - co-ordinator, $11,500 per year; assistant co-ordinator, $6,600 per year; Program money, $2,500 per year. A secondary source of money for the Agassiz program is the small fee which is charged for each separate activity.

The Agassiz program then is yours - it grows if and how you want it to. The staff is present to implement the wishes of the council, the council is made up of anyone who wishes to attend council meetings. It is one of the few organizations in this, or any other city, which is directly responsible to the people it serves.

If you wish further information call staff members Kate Mattes or Jay Lord at 876-9268 or council members Betsy Harshbarger at 547-8946 or Holly Cratsley at 864-6117.

* Taken from "Community Schools in

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

THE AGASSIZ WHISTLER is published twice a month by the Agassiz Community Schools Program for the entire neighborhood. The cost is 10¢ per issue or $1.00 for a six months' subscription mailed to your home. Call 876-9268 for more information or visit the office at 28 Sacramento Street. We welcome your literary contributions, letters, suggestions, or advertisement requests.

Jay Lord, Agassiz Community Schools Co-ordinator
Kate Mattes, Assistant Co-ordinator
Jill Norton, Editor for The Whistler

* * * * * * * * * * * * *
Cambridge, "a report from a committee co-chairmaned by John Gairachty and the Reverend Carl Edwards.

(The Whistler will be glad to publish letters from anyone within the community who would like to share their views on our local program or this article. Send them to Editor, The Agassiz Whistler, 28 Sacramento Street.)

COUNCIL MEETING

At the October 8st Council Meeting Jay Lord, the present co-ordinator of the Agassiz Community Schools Program informed the council that for personal reasons he would no longer be able to make the time commitment needed for the co-ordinator’s job (55 to 60 hours per week). Acting on this information, the council voted on three basic changes in the staffing of the program:

1. Kate Mattes, now the assistant co-ordinator, would become the co-ordinator, responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Agassiz program.

2. Jay Lord would become a part-time assistant (20 hours per week) in charge of program development.

3. A third person, competent in early childhood development, would be hired part-time to look after morning play-groups. (No extra monies would be required for the hiring of the third person, as the two part-time people would share one salary.)

This decision was presented to the Cambridge Community Schools central office and was approved by the City Manager.

* * *

Next COUNCIL MEETING November 12, 8 pm

CANDIDATES RALLY

A very successful Candidates’ Rally was held on Sunday, October 18, sponsored by the Agassiz and Peabody Community Schools programs and the Cambridge League of Women Voters. The rally was held in the Peabody School cafeteria from 3 to 5:30 pm.

Twenty candidates for national, state, and Middlesex County offices participated. Most of the major races were covered. Josiah Spaulding presented his views on the responsibilities of a United States senator. Michael Dukakis discussed the White-Dukakis platform for Massachusetts government. Three contestants for the seat of State Representative from the 2nd Middlesex District - Thomas Mahoney, Martha Reardon and Nicholas Peck - all presented their programs. John Buckley and John Dever, vying for Sheriff, provided some lively debate, as well as John Zamparelli and Vincent McCabe, who are competing for the office of Register of Deeds.

The occasion was also a festive one, with homemade refreshments donated by members of the Peabody community and excellent babysitters from the Agassiz neighborhood. The 200-plus crowd seemed to enjoy the intimate and active interchange with the candidates and their questions helped to make the afternoon a stimulating one for all. It is hoped that this activity can be repeated next year.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If anyone has the time and ability to help the Community Schools program with classes in knitting, sewing, or crocheting, please phone 876-9268. We have had many requests from people in the community to offer these courses.
REFERENDA QUESTIONS - NOVEMBER 3, 1970

(Most of the information on the following pages has been prepared by the League of Women Voters.)

1. A proposed constitutional amendment to permit the classification of property for purposes of taxation.

A classified property tax system would group property into different classes according to use. Classes could then be assessed or taxed at different rates.

Under present constitutional law the legislature is authorized to tax all property at a uniform rate.

This amendment would allow the state to adopt a classified property tax, but it would require action by the legislature for it to be established.

- A YES vote is to allow property classification
- A NO vote is to retain the present uniform rate

Arguments:

Pro: In practice there is already a difference in the assessments of different kinds of property; residential property is often lower than commercial property. A classified property tax would legalize what is being done anyway.

Con: Lower assessment or tax rates on one class of property shifts the burden for higher rates onto other groups of taxpayers.

Pro: Bringing assessments to the 100% fair cash level, as now required by law, would be a burden on home owners. Classification would allow them a lower rate.

Con: A favorable rate for homeowners tends to favor wealthy homeowners, and not low income renters. There are fairer ways to relieve the property tax burden.

Pro: New business plants can be granted lower rates, and this could induce them to locate in the state.

Con: In the states which have a classified property tax there is constant lobbying by special interest groups for favorable tax treatment. Sometimes the legislature grants exemptions without consideration of the cities and towns.
2. A proposed constitutional amendment to change residence requirements for voting in a state election.

The amendment would allow a voter to be eligible to vote in a state election after living in a Massachusetts town or district for six months, instead of the present constitutional provision of one year. If passed, the residence requirements would then be in conformity with the federal law which requires only 6 months residence. The federal law is effective as of January, 1971.

a YES vote would shorten the residence requirements to 6 months

a NO vote would retain the present state constitutional one year residence requirement

Background Information:

A recent federal court ruling declared our present one-year residence requirements unconstitutional. This decision is being appealed by Massachusetts in the courts. In the interim, the legislature has passed emergency legislation to allow six-month residents to vote in the congressional elections. Special registration lists have been established. The court then ordered this list to apply to the full slate. If the court does not rule on the appeal before the election, the special registration ballots will be impounded. They will not be counted until the Supreme Court rules on the constitutionality of our present one-year residence requirements. If the Court should uphold the lower court decision then the impounded ballots would be counted. It is possible that these ballots could alter the results of one or more election contests.

3. A proposed constitutional amendment to lower the voting age to nineteen for state elections.

This constitutional amendment would lower the voting age to 19 for state elections beginning in 1971. The intent of this amendment is superseded by the Federal Voting Rights Act. However, the constitutionality of that section of the law which deals with lowering the voting age to 18 is undergoing a court challenge. If the law is not upheld, Massachusetts voting age will be determined by this referendum.

a YES vote would lower the voting age to 19

a NO vote would retain the present minimum voting age of 21

*   *   *

THE POLLS WILL BE OPEN ON NOVEMBER 3 FROM 8 A.M. TO 8 P.M.
4. A proposed constitutional amendment to create 240 single member representative
districts, apportioned by the legislature.

The main points of the proposed amendment are:

a. It would maintain a 240 member House and a 40 member Senate.
b. It would establish single member districts, thus eliminating double and triple
districts.
c. The legislature would become the sole apportioning body. At present, the leg-
islature apportions a number of legislative seats to the counties, and a county
commission draws the district lines within their own counties.
d. The present provision prohibiting the division of wards in creating legislative
districts would be nullified. Under this proposal wards could be divided down
to precinct lines for purposes of apportionment.
e. The continued individual representation of Dukes and Nantucket Counties is
specifically guaranteed, regardless of their population.
f. The basis of representation will be changed from "legal voter" to total population.

a YES vote would establish 240 single member
districts to be apportioned by the legislature

a NO vote would maintain the present 240 single and
multi-member districts drawn by the County Commissions

5. This question is a non-binding question of public policy. Its purpose is to deter-
mine the thinking of the voters of the Commonwealth on the question of U.S. foreign
policy in Vietnam. It was put on the ballot by the Massachusetts legislature.

Which of the following do you prefer with reference to the future course of action
by the U.S. in Vietnam?

A. Win a military victory.
B. Withdraw our armed forces in accordance with a planned schedule.
C. Withdraw all our armed forces immediately.

Although the meaning of these choices is subject to individual interpretation,
generally it may be assumed that those who choose a military victory (A) would like
to see a stepped up military offensive. Those who choose withdrawal in accordance
with a planned schedule (B) will be supporting the present Administration policy.
Those who select immediate withdrawal (C) indicate they favor a speedier conclu-
sion to our military involvement in Vietnam.

6. A four-part question concerning the sale of alcoholic beverages.

NEIGHBORHOOD FOOD COOP

A group of Prentiss Street and Frost Street residents have been learning about food distribution. The pay-off has been in lower prices and higher quality fruits and vegetables.

The food coop was organized last June by Chris and Rae Burns (recently moved to Somerville) and Ann and Richard Michelin of 41 Prentiss Street. The Burns provided prior experience and could initiate the members into the various tasks of a food coop. Sixteen households are participating at present.

The first trial runs were enough to convince the members that they had found a satisfying alternative to escalating food prices. Iceberg lettuce was 10¢ a head, beautiful peppers were 5¢ each, a quart of strawberries cost 38¢.

There are three basic tasks to be divided among the members. First, "ordering" - a shopping list of approximately 8-10 items is composed, based on a market bulletin which indicates good buys. This is conveniently posted where members can place their order. The list is tallied and passed on to the "purchaser." The purchaser makes a trip out to the New England Produce Center in Chelsea where the food order is filled by wholesalers at prices slightly higher than those that the retail supermarkets must pay. Even though purchasing is an early morning chore it is not without compensation as someone must taste and choose which strawberries to buy. The purchaser delivers the produce to the "distributor." Coop members pick up their orders at the distributor's house during the early evening.

The coop has been limited to fruits, vegetables, and eggs from the wholesale market, but it will soon try meat buying too.

SWEDISH LIMPA BREAD

(The recipe below was one provided at the Community Schools summer course in bread-making; sessions received with much enthusiasm by the participants.)

1 1/4 cups water
1/3 cup brown sugar
2 TBS shortening
1 tsp. anise
1/4 cup molasses
3 1/2 cups white flour
2 1/4 cups rye flour

Combine 1 1/4 cups water, shortening, anise, molasses, and brown sugar in a saucepan and bring to boil. Boil 3 minutes and cool to lukewarm (about 45 minutes).

In a large bowl dissolve yeast in 3/4 cup water. Add molasses mixture and white flour. Beat until smooth. Cover and let rise until double (1 1/2 to 2 hours).

Stir down sponge; add salt and rye flour. Brush surface with oil, cover and let rise again until double.

Knead 8-10 minutes. Form dough into two smooth balls and place on greased baking sheet. Cover and let rise until double. Brush top with egg yolk diluted with 1 TBS. water and bake at 350° for 50 minutes.

HALLOWEEN PARTY!

All children in the Agassiz School neighborhood are invited to the annual Halloween party given by the VFW at the school. The party will get under way at about 6 pm on Saturday, the 31st, with movies beginning after a good-sized crowd has gathered. There will be a judging of costumes and ice cream and candy for all. Mr. John McCarthy from the North Cambridge VFW Post 2103 is in charge of arrangements. He says this is the 24th year the Halloween party will have been held.
TUESDAY EVENINGS AT 8:15

Special events at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education, 42 Brattle St. Admission $1.00. Limited seating; purchase tickets in advance.

November 3 - A Look at Sesame Street. Gwendolyn Peters, Utilization Director at WGBH-TV, will discuss the aims, goals, highlights, future plans, and results of the exciting children's series.

November 10 - The Cultural Confrontation. The American Hippie Communes - their life styles, ideologies, reactions to visitors, leadership patterns, and attitudes towards drugs and sex, will be discussed by Stephen Wallenstein who visited approximately 30 communes in the summer of 1970.

November 17 - The Crime of Prison. John Cone, director of the rehabilitation program "Project Fisherman" will discuss the effect of prison on human beings and failures of the current rehabilitation system. He and his ex-convict advisors will tell how their program will reduce the rate of return to prison from 66% to 20%.

November 24 - Piano Workshop. Presented by the students of Sophie Lindstrom. No admission charge.

COUNTRY STORE SALE

Donations are now being collected from Agassiz area neighbors for a Country Store Sale to be held for the benefit of the Agassiz School PTA and Community Schools program. Items for the sale may be purchased, hand-made, or white elephants from your home. As children will be coming to the sale those donating should consider small items which they will be able to buy.

Your donations should be delivered to Mrs. Elizabeth Basa at 37 Wendell Street (rear door). Her phone is 868-0183.

The Country Store Sale will be held in November (date to be announced) on PTP Night, when parents are invited to the school to talk with teachers. The entire community is invited to attend the sale.

ECOLOGY GROUP NOTED

The Agassiz Environment Group has been brought to the attention of the entire Cambridge community by means of an article in the October 1 Cambridge Chronicle. Priscilla Ellis, the Environment Group, and its newspaper recycling project were the subjects of "Under the Sun's Bonnet," a regular feature of the newspaper.

WHISTLER SUBSCRIPTION APPLICATION

Please mail me The Whistler twice a months for the next six months. I enclose $1.00. (Check or money order only, please, made out to the Agassiz Community Schools Program. Send to the Agassiz Community Schools Program at 28 Sacramento Street.)

NAME

ADDRESS